

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: CHIC

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

The challenges facing Chickasaw National Recreation Area today mirror those facing the National Park Service as a whole, including: shifting population demographics, a growing reliance on technology, fewer children in the outdoors, climate change, and the impending retirement of many employees. Inherent in the Centennial Challenge is the need to respond appropriately to these impending changes. This implementation strategy seeks to fulfill that purpose on behalf of Chickasaw National Recreation Area.

Stewardship: This park was created in 1906 due to the presence of springs in the area. With growth and development underway, increasing pressure is being placed on the water resources held in the aquifer underlying the park. Strategies are needed to protect the integrity of those water resources.

Environmental Leadership: In order to be an environmental leader, this park needs to model the behavior we would like others to follow. One prime example is in the area of recycling. The park plans to adopt a comprehensive recycling program that will be implemented in all campgrounds, picnic areas, and park offices.

Recreational Experiences: The park has many opportunities to enhance its already abundant recreational opportunities. These opportunities include additional bicycling, camping, and hiking experiences; developing a "Gateway Community" partnership; and responding more effectively to the recreational needs of Spanish-speaking people.

Education: The mission of the park must be shared more effectively with students by developing additional curriculum-based programs for use in the local schools. Closer coordination with the Goddard Youth Camp located in the park can also be an asset in reaching the student population. In addition, the park has the opportunity to utilize the internet and other technologies to more effectively connect with park visitors.

Professional Excellence: The park needs to address some of the complexities of seeking federal employment by holding sessions in the local community about how to find a job with the National Park Service. In the area of partnerships, the park will pursue an expanded base of local support.

Armed with an existing team of dedicated employees and looking forward to the chance to enlist more partners in support of the park, the management team of Chickasaw National Recreation Area is excited about the possibilities that the Centennial Challenge offers to the park and the entire Park Service.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Bruce Noble

Site: CHIC

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Chickasaw National Recreation Area will construct a new Visitor Center that will provide visitors with information, orientation, and interpretation about the area. It will also help to create an identity for the recreation area as a unit of the National Park System by being highly visible and easily accessible to visitors. The project was approved and funded during FY01, but due to contracting problems, it was never able to be awarded and constructed. Because of the inability to award the construction of the facility, the money was re-directed in FY03 to other national needs. This project continues to be the park's #1 priority for additional facilities and is of particular interest to the congressional delegation from this district of Oklahoma.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.**

Continue to rehabilitate historic buildings and structures according to the standards and requirements listed in the Cultural Landscape Report. There are over 200 projects listed in the report. Chickasaw National Recreation Area has approximately 26 historical buildings and over 270 historical structures.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

A great deal of federal, state, and private resources have been dedicated to research and remediation of exotic or invasive plant populations. Through the Integrated Pest Management and the Fire Fuels reduction programs the National Park Service has made great strides in removing and preventing these infestations. Since 2001, over one million dollars have been invested to reduce Eastern Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana*, by fire and mechanical treatments at CHIC. Although the program will continue within the park, vegetation knows no boundary. If the park manages the vegetation over the years, and the surrounding invasives continue their course, much of our effort will have been wasted. The Governor of Oklahoma has created the Cedar Task Force to study the scope of cedar encroachment, but has limited resources needed to continue on a steady course. With the resources of the National Park Service, we will partner with established groups to create an organized approach to solving the problems through education, leadership, and funding assistance.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.**

One of the primary purposes of Chickasaw National Recreation Area is to protect its fresh and mineral water springs. These springs and their flows are one of the area's fundamental resources, contributing to the area's national and cultural significance. Over the years the flows of the springs have fluctuated. Today, only five groups of springs, out of the original 33, still flow.

Chickasaw National Recreation Area would actively encourage a partnership to identify approaches to manage the springs. This would include increased monitoring, additional studies, and protection of recharge areas. We are also proposing to hire a permanent full time hydrologist to provide expertise throughout this process.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

☒ Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

Work towards completing all cultural resource inventories on the list of classified structures for the Platt District. Conduct systematic cultural landscape inventories for other areas outside of the Platt District. The possibility exists that subtle landscape features associated with early homestead/ranching operation may be found in these areas that could promote understanding of late 19th and early 20th century settlement patterns.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Enhancement of the park's resource protection program includes increasing monitoring of cultural and natural resources, investigations and visitor education. Given the erosion, boundary encroachment, and urban interface challenges that Chickasaw has been increasingly facing over the years, the park's land must be surveyed, defined and fenced. The park presently has over two dozen encroachments identified that involve private structures, destruction of natural resources and impacts to visitor use. To preserve the park's perimeter and its resources, a boundary survey by the Bureau of Land Management should be conducted for the Arbuckle and Platt districts. Surveying and fencing would focus on the park borders where park land intersects with land owners and the City of Sulphur. The park will also proactively prevent additional resource damage by training park staff on investigation, identification, quantification and documentation of resource damage.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

There are 19 National Historic Landmarks in the state of Oklahoma, each containing their own distinct and important history. The NPS employees in Oklahoma have begun to build relationships with the Native American tribes, the U.S. government, the Oklahoma State Historical Society, private land owners and private organizations. Enhancing on what NPS is already doing to assist sites associated with Oklahoma's history would be an excellent opportunity to highlight these historic places and continue to build strong relationships and trust. This project would focus on outreach with these various partners through site visits and further communication, along with creating a brochure highlighting all 19 of Oklahoma's NHL's, which would include photos and descriptions. These brochures will inform the public about their existence and the rich history here in Oklahoma.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

ENVIRONMENT

☒ **Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.**

☒ **Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.**

The park will continue to work with the appropriate partners and surrounding land owners to educate them to the impacts of their operations on the parks' springs and waters of the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer. Research will be conducted to increase the science based knowledge of water conservation and impacts from users to the natural systems of the aquifer.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

ENVIRONMENT

☒ **Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.**

☒ **Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.**

Demonstrate through conservation activities and leadership that even the smallest of efforts can make a difference in the public's lives and the environment. Educate the public of the benefits of recycling by initiating a program within the park to reduce the waste stream from visitors and internal operations.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.**

Four stroke engines will continue to be the standard operation for all boats used in the park. The one remaining two stroke outboard engine will be replaced with a four stroke engine.

As vehicles are replaced efforts will be made to acquire more environmentally friendly units that utilize the latest technologies and alternative fuels.

Solar technologies will again be used in the construction of the comfort station at the Point Area Campground to produce shower water and lighting alternatives.

Alternative energy sources will be utilized in future construction within the park and rehabilitation of existing facilities will utilize alternative energy sources where possible.

Alternative fuels vehicles and equipment will be purchased in the future to utilize new technologies and more efficient operations to decrease the dependence on carbon based fuels.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Serve as a model for energy efficiency, under Executive Order 13423, by ensuring Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.**

When planning construction, rehabilitation or upgrades to facilities in the park, green technologies meeting the LEEDS standard will be utilized to help reduce the utility costs and serve as demonstration projects for the local community. Alternative energy solutions will continue to be used at the Lake District comfort stations and will be utilized in new facilities as they come

Site: CHIC

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

on line.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Knowledge of the importance of good stewardship of the park and its resources is paramount to the continued health of the park as well as the economic base for the rural community that surrounds the park. The park will develop a process of enlisting comments and input from the local community and open communications about the changes that are taking place within the park. This process is critical for continuing the good relationship with our gateway communities. We must work together in order to put forth a unified effort to protect the public resources that are so vital to this area, not only for the economic benefits but also the preservation of the natural environment for future generations to come.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

Chickasaw National Recreation Area is a Centennial Park with a strong history of family hiking/biking. These treasured family experiences have allowed Americans to discover new places, experience personal growth and rejuvenated their passion for life. This Centennial Vision of Go Hiking/Biking has been part of American's leisure time for centuries and it continues today. It is only American to improve the quality of our trail system and give today's families of America an opportunity to Discover their National Park.

This vision of Go Hiking/Biking is already well developed at Chickasaw National Recreation Area with over 20 miles of improved trails, a 5 mile multi-use trail and over 30 miles of park roadways located within the Platt National Historic District and along the shores of Arbuckle Lake. These trails need additional planning efforts to develop an interconnecting trail system throughout the park and its gateway communities, additional miles of trails to connect to existing trails and facilities, and to provide for proper trail surfaces to ensure the visitors experience.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

RECREATION

☒ Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Chickasaw National Recreation Area is a Centennial Park with a strong history of family recreation. The experiences of group camping and day use picnicking is a traditional use of the Platt National Historic District and is a valued tradition. This Centennial Vision to expand our visitor base to a larger number of Hispanic families will build leisure opportunities for future generations. With citizens relocating to the southern states in record breaking numbers and traditional park visitors coming from Oklahoma and Texas, it is only natural to improve the quality of our services and give the families of America an opportunity to Discover their National Park.

This vision of large family outings is well developed at Chickasaw National Recreation Area with 5 campgrounds, dozens of swimming areas and over 800 picnic areas, located throughout the Platt National Historic District and along the shores of Arbuckle Lake. These facilities need bilingual Spanish speaking staff members, bilingual exhibits, and formal programs that enhance the vis

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

Chickasaw National Recreation Area is a Centennial Park with a strong history of family camping. This treasured family experience has allowed Americans to discover new places, experience personal growth and rejuvenated their passion for life. This Centennial Vision of Go Camping has been in the fabric of American's leisure time for centuries. It is only American to improve the quality of our camping facilities and give the families of America an opportunity to discover their National Park. This vision of Go Camping is already well developed at Chickasaw National Recreation Area with over 400 campsites, 60 recreational vehicles sites and over 100 walk-in tent sites located in the Platt National Historic District and along the shores of Arbuckle Lake. These campgrounds need additional electric utility sites to meet the needs of the baby boomer's recreational vehicles, additional shower and restroom facilities to meet today's hygiene standards, and allow us to keep up with today's ever changing recreational vehicle designs pertaining to recreational vehicle sizes, whether on the roadway, in the parking lot or camping.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

Chickasaw National Recreation Area is a Centennial Park with a strong history of family boating. This treasured family experience has allowed Americans to discover new places, experience personal growth and rejuvenated their passion for life. This Centennial Vision of Go Boating has been part of American's leisure time for centuries and it continues today. It is only American to improve the quality of our boating facilities and give the families an opportunity to Discover their National Park.

This vision of Go Boating is already well developed at Chickasaw National Recreation Area with three developed boat ramps, three courtesy docks and dozens of shoreline campsites. Additional improvement of overnight courtesy docks, boat moorings, a volunteer-based marine patrol and boat-in campsites would bring additional visitors to the area to enhance tourism and explore their national park.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

EDUCATION

☒ Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The "Discovery Room" will establish an educational program within the park that is especially designed for the State of Oklahoma's Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) module for the physical sciences. The program will enhance the educational experience for all school groups who visit the park. For those schools that cannot visit the park, a curriculum water laboratory guide will assist teachers to help students understand the primary interpretive theme of water resources at the park. Additionally, a TEL-Net station will be located at the Discovery Room to provide on-line training opportunities for staff and visitors.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

EDUCATION

☒ Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

☒ Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

The Oklahoma City National Memorial is recognized through the National Park Service website and has proven to be a great resource for visitors to obtain valuable information about this site. We would like to expand on the current information in order to better serve the visiting public and to promote the National Park Service mission and programs.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

The park Junior Ranger program will expand to include a water resources section that compliments the visitor experience and use of the Discovery Room.

Also, the Junior Ranger Program at the Oklahoma City National Memorial is in need of updating. Since the last printing in 2001, several changes have occurred and many lessons have been learned. We would like to develop the booklet in two forms, one for younger children ages 5-9 and one for older children ages 10-12. This will enable us to effectively and appropriately gear our programs toward the corresponding ages and activities. Children have been an integral part of the bombing story and throughout the memorialization process. Being able to provide this service appropriately would have lasting effects in many positive ways.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

In responding to the need to improve interpretation of the park water resources from the location of the Travertine Nature Center, the north room that currently functions as storage space will be converted into a "Discovery Room". This classroom setting will provide neighboring school districts and students attending the Goddard Youth Camp environmental education facility with the opportunity to bring students to the Discovery Room and learn about the special park water resources that the park enabling legislation sought to protect. The park will utilize educational curriculum already in place such as the non-profit "Blue Thumb" program to educate park visitors about park water resources. The hydrology of park water resources is also implicitly linked with geologic resources. As a result, the legislative mandate to protect park water resources inherently requires similar attention to park geologic resources. The Discovery Room in addition to addressing park hydrological resources will also provide an opportunity to interpret park geological resources.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

EDUCATION

☒ Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

☒ Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

The Travertine Nature Center serves as the park's main interpretive and education center. The park proposes that the Interpretation program responds to the Centennial Challenge by expanding the educational emphasis of the Travertine Nature Center to highlighting park water resources. The nature center building itself is a unique resource inspired by the school of architecture developed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Built in 1969 the building age is approaching historic status as a park resource. Uniquely the nature center is built over and sits astride Travertine Creek. The location of the building gives an unparalleled opportunity to interpret the park water resources, i.e., its freshwater and mineral springs, its stream, and its lake resources. These water resources have been described as an "Oklahoma Oasis". Their importance to the cultural heritage of the Oklahoma people cannot be underestimated. These freshwater and mineral waters found at the park have served as medicinal remedies for the body and as recreational resources to renew the spirit and body for generations of park visitors.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

☒ Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Diversity recruitment will be increased through a variety of means such as community job fairs and career college fairs to promote the National Park Service in potential applicant's focus. Public training sessions in the local community will be conducted on how to apply for National Park Service jobs.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

☒ Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

The National Park Service in Oklahoma is committed to reducing visitor and employee accidents. Improve the recreation area's employee safety program by providing for opportunities for safety education and discussions along with increasing safety practices in the workplace. Personal protective equipment will always be provided and worn as necessary. Increased safety messages and interpretive programs will be presented to the visiting public to provide knowledge about the hazards of recreating in a natural area. Additional protection patrols will be accomplished with the increase of FTE of law enforcement rangers which will provide water safety patrols and contacts with the public.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CHIC

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Make national parks the first choice in philanthropic giving among those concerned about environmental, cultural, and recreational values.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Visitors care deeply and feel a connection with Chickasaw National Recreation Area. There is a strong base of repeat visitors with their families (1.6 million recreation visitors annually) who vacation here each year. Many of those visitors may wish to support the recreation area philanthropically; however, there is no philanthropic foundation dedicated to supporting Chickasaw. By 2016, we plan to see the creation of a self-sustaining non-profit foundation dedicated to this effort.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS